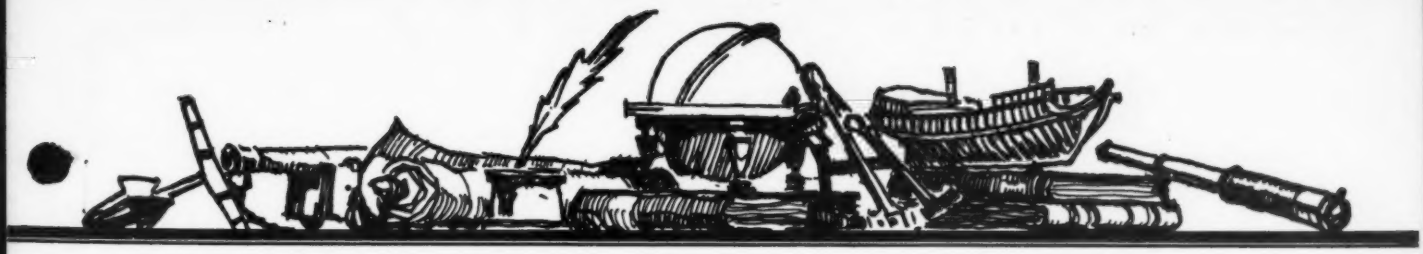


NAUTICAL RESEARCH JOURNAL

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE NAUTICAL RESEARCH GUILD

HARRY D. HAMILTON, SEC'TY-TREAS., 15004 E. GRANADA AVE., WHITTIER, CALIFORNIA

VOLUME IV MAY 1952 NUMBER 5

Capable Masters and Favorable Winds Make Fast Passages

By Winston Langdon

There are many qualifications to the above statement but securing facts and records to bear out the thought is not an easy matter. We can at least make a beginning and expect further contributors to develop the theme.

Before tackling the subject of wind it will be well to consider a few other things, and for the present not too many of them. We are all devoted to the sailing ship because she was the most beautiful creation of man. The elements of design can give not only beauty but factors of speed. The sharp ships of the Eighteen Fifties were intentionally designed for speed and beauty. Later merchant vessels and the final great ocean carriers were designed to carry the freight; but we do not find them lacking in beauty nor in speed. Their sheer size and lofty rig are beautiful and their inherent strength allowed them to be driven hard and continuously to develop sustained speed.

Maintenance of the ship is one of the factors in which the ownership had the heavy hand. The condition of the gear is very important. If the vessel made good earnings the owners were more apt to spend the money on maintenance and replacements as needed. In poorly kept ships worry about this, that and the other being apt to be carried away, was hardly conducive to speed. Further, clean bottom is needed; tons of barnacles and yard long weeds get the ship on the over due list.

Lading had its importance. If left to the stevadores alone the loaded ship might be in poor trim and cranky. Skipping other considerations we may get along to the mates and crew; whether the vessel was characterized as a happy ship or a hell ship, fast passages hardly to be expected unless the crew are good seamen.

Now as to favorable wind and there are variations of definition. When a course is laid off and the vessel can be made to hold it, that of course is a favorable wind. When we are told schooner GEORGE W. WELLS sailed from Portland to Hampton Roads in fifty hours we instantly assume she had a favorable wind. Similarly we judge the ship WESTERN SHORE had a favorable wind when in 1875 she beat the steamer ORIFLAMME from San Francisco to Astoria. But we would not expect a round coasting voyage to have favorable winds both ways. Yet the ship ELWELL under Captain Barston in 1896 left San Francisco April 22nd, arrived Nanaimo, British Columbia, April 29th, left Nanaimo May 2nd, arrived San Francisco May 7th.

The passages most apt to have favorable winds are those that can use the dependable trade winds. From California to the Hawaiian Islands two weeks is very ordinary time. As far as known to me, the records are ship HENRY B. HYDE, 9 days, 4½ hours, San Francisco to Honolulu and bark RODERICK DHU 9 days 3 hours to Hilo. This, of course, is in the region of the NE trades and to think of a passage using also the

SE trades we may consider the run from San Francisco to Sydney made by Captain J. N. Knowles in the ship GLORY OF THE SEAS in 1875. An examination of an abstract log shows the wind never deserted him even in the vicinity of the equator. The final entry is "Passage anchor to anchor 35 days, 11 hours, 15 minutes. Total distance 6844 miles; sailed 7026; average 8½ knots." (I think the 6844 above is a misprint for 6448, the usual tabulated distance.) The return passage, Sydney to San Francisco is quite a different story. Apparently Captain Knowles did not pick up the S.E. trades until in his third week at sea and his total distance sailed was 8897 miles. Still, and however, his time of 53 days was "the fastest passage that has been made for some time."

From the above we must not infer that one passage must require more time than the return. It is possible to pick passages of about equal length in different directions. For instance the ship GREAT ADMIRAL had a passage in 1869 under Captain I. N. Jackson of 37 days from San Francisco to Hong Kong; the distance sailed being 7097 miles. (Tabulated distance is 6049). In 1878 under Captain Benjamin Thompson GREAT ADMIRAL ran from Hong Kong to San Francisco in 38 days. Westward across the Pacific is not always the shortest way. Ten years later GREAT ADMIRAL under Captain J. F. Rowell made three voyages San Francisco to Hong Kong and in each instance the return passage was a lesser distance and fewer days.

The performance is not surprising as going westward we might expect Rowell to make southing of the N. E. Trades, while on the return, once clear of Formosa, he would get in higher latitude to use the anti-trades and run his easting down on the edge of the "roaring forties". In fact from a point no further north than Shanghai we find that in 1902 schooner SOLANO ran to Port Townsend in 24 days. (Tabular distance 5054). And as an example from a point in the anti-trades to the tropics I give you ship AYRAN 17½ days - Yokohama to Honolulu. She was said to have averaged a speed of 9 knots. Since this would have indicated a sailed distance of 3780 while the actual distance is 3394, AYRAN must have had a very direct track.

All these instances are one ocean passage but they point up the need of re-definition of the favorable wind. The experience and knowledge of masters and observers has reduced wind to a pattern, intricate and with many variations but also with many great constancies. The best ways between ports at great distances apart became established as those routes where winds advantageous to sailing might be expected. The favorable wind is then the one the vessel can use to hold its route.

Knowledge of the route was a valuable asset to any mariner. Consider the CYRUS WAKEFIELD. Mate I. N. Hibberd was appointed to command her when he was only 25 years old. From San Francisco he took the ship to Liverpool and return in eight months and two days; the return passage being an even 100 days. It was not very long before Captain Hibberd had a passage of 91 days from San Francisco to New York. Not by any means a record but many masters were always over a hundred days; in fact that number is a fast passage.

The route being established, using the wind available on that route depends on the ability of the master. From Newcastle, N.S.W., the way to Hong Kong is extremely hazardous but in 1888 Captain Clarence N. Meyers took the bark ADAM W. SPIES over it in thirty one days. We can readily believe he made the best use of the wind available to him.

Captain Phineas Blanchard was a passage maker in a small bark WILLARD MUDGETT. From Buenos Ayres to Cape Town he was just fifteen days; Cape Town to Barbados twenty-four days; Boston to Sierra Leone seventeen days; Konakri, French Guinea, to Turk's Island, W. I., fourteen days. These are Atlantic crossings in sequence. In no sense can one suggest the element of luck or favoring winds; it was up to Captain Blanchard to find and use wind.

The long routes were the test of real ability. As a vessel must sail it can be

right up to 15,000 miles from Europe to Australia and perhaps the same distance on around the world to return. Unfortunately I haven't the master's name that had LAWHILL in 1924 but his performance was excellent for he took her from Bordeaux to Port Lincoln in seventy days. Homeward with grain was usually eastward around Cape Horn. Masters hoped for a ninety day passage, were happy with a hundred and were as apt as not to be a hundred and twenty days, or even longer. In this trade Captain de Gloux was out in front often but he was getting along to the end of his career and ready to retire when he made his crack passage in PARMA in 1933. This eighty-three day passage is related by Captain Villiers in two books. The track is beautiful with only one abrupt jog in the South Pacific where an east wind headed them for a day.

There was another east around the world trade in which Captain W. F. Stetson made several voyages. This was from Puget Sound to South Africa with lumber. In the bark BONANZA he had a passage from Puget Sound to Algoa Bay in ninety days; from there to Newcastle, N.S.W. for coal cargo in thirty-five days, thence to San Francisco in sixty-three days. From 1895 this trade was using many schooners and barkentines for reasons of economy, reduced size of crew, and lesser draft for African harbors.

Speaking of the financial side of shipping one is reminded to mention the subsidy system of the French government made it advantageous for their ships to make long passages in no hurry. That is not to say, however, that French ships were incapable of speed. The bark BAYARD ran from Hakodate to San Francisco in 24 days. The bark FRANCOIS on her maiden voyage under Captain Arnaudtizon sailed 11,353 miles to Newcastle, Australia in 80 days (an average speed of six knots). This may have been unsatisfactory as Captain Bellini took over at San Francisco and spent 210 days for the passage to Queenstown where Irish youngsters welcome him with flowers. Another bark LA ROCHE JACQUELINE has been credited with an eleven days passage from Philadelphia to Cherbourg.

Then there are instances of equal passage times from the same day of departure over slightly different tracks. I think it was in 1929 that bark PENANG and barkentine MOZART went to Australia in 86 days. MOZART sailed from London and PENANG from Cork;they arrived in Spencer Gulf together without having sighted each other on the way. Homeward they arrived in Queenstown about twelve hours apart, MOZART first for 119 day passage; and again they had not seen each other. In 1904 the ship JULES GOMMES and the four-masted bark LOCH CARRON sailed from San Francisco on Christmas Day, were in company six days, parted, and both arrived at Queenstown after 112 days at sea; on comparing passage time it was found to be the same to the very hour.

In the above paragraph are named vessels of four different rigs. The past passage of course belongs to no one rig. Nor is size a controlling factor. Back before the days of sharp ships even the little packets had speed. In 1831 the brig JOHN GILPIN of 282 tons was built in Maryland. From Philadelphia for the Dutch Indies in 1832 she reached Anjier 82 days out having sailed 15,261 miles. Later JOHN GILPIN had a passage of 56 days, Callao to Lintin, China, which stood as a record for several years. (Drawings of John Gilpin were in the Rhode Island Mariner, 1927-28.)

In these brief comments I have avoided mention of perils. Reefs, shoals, coral and ice, heavy weather and soul killing calm have to be avoided or dealt with. Nor have I mentioned the obvious trouble spots or hard corners. The wind is the propelling force. Free or favorable it helps the passage. But the water in which the ship floats also has a motion that carries the vessel with it, sometimes favoring, sometimes hindering. The passage making master studies current as well as wind.

It seems to sum up - A FAST PASSAGE WAS THE RESULT OF A CAPABLE MASTER GETTING THE WIND HE NEEDED WHERE HE SOUGHT IT.

"FLORENCE A". -- Compliment or Libel?

It is hard, if not impossible, to separate a doctor from the medical point of view. Call it talking shop, cheap commercialism, or just plain corney, or call it anything you dam please, but I hold that a hobby ought to lengthen a man's life or at least brighten his way down 'coronary lane! Furthermore, if a man's hobby does not do this, then he hasn't got a hobby - he has an affliction. What he does or how proficient he becomes at it, is, according to my philosophy, of secondary importance. What does the hobby do for him? That's the crux, and that, by heck, is the ultimate and only justification for the sketch here included.

The FLORENCE A. was a big but not hulking schooner which I snapped at Reedsville, Virginia at anchor about 1928. Then well past her best, cut down, hogged and very time worn, but still a lady, an aged but distinguished lady. How did she look in her prime? I wondered then and kept on wondering. I did not have her lines and wouldn't have known what to do with them if I had, but I did know some skippers who "knew her when". Having done a little pen and ink sketching and being of the complete and comforting persuasion at the time that the experiment would go no further, I tried a little reconstruction and landscaping. At Mr. Hamilton's request, I present the result for your inspection. The men who knew her and sailed on her consider the resemblance not inaccurate. Admittedly it is artistically ororous.

The FLORENCE A. was built at Cherryfield, Maine, in 1890, and abandoned from the register about 1932. Her specifications were as follows: 154 T.G., 126 T.N., 96.5 X 27.4 X 7.2 feet.

It is the considered opinion of everybody that a fellow lays himself open to the awful truth where it hurts the most when he offers his hobby for inspection. Gentlemen, fear not for my feelings and let drive with your criticism! This isn't my hobby. Collecting photos and history of schooners is my pride and joy, my claim to mania and my besetting sin. And do you know, I think that it is already lengthening my life. If not then how does it happen that now, after forty full and fatiguing years, life begins?

(Picture of the FLORENCE A by courtesy of Mariner's Museum)

A. L. Van Name, Jr. M. D.

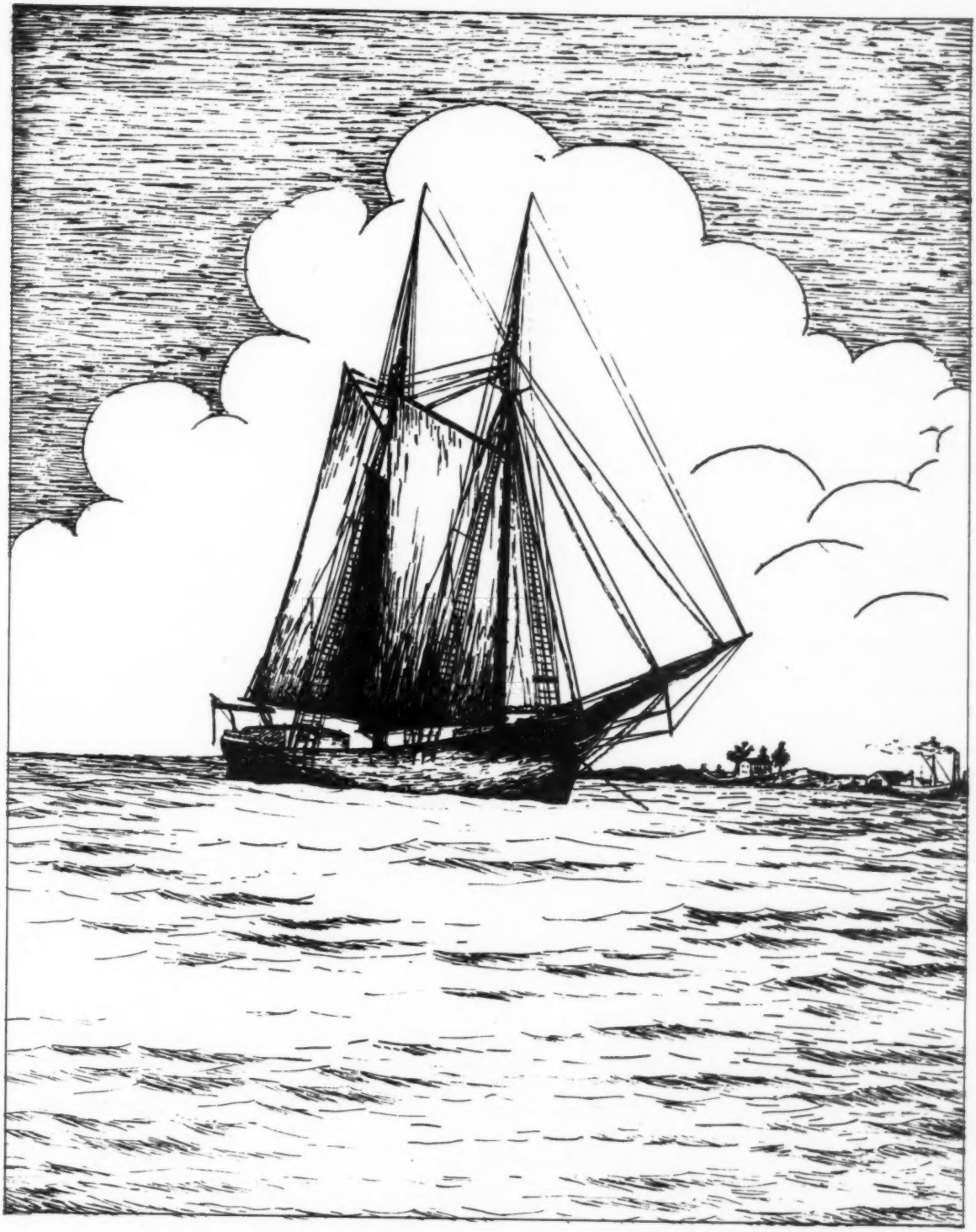
MEETING OF THE NEW YORK GROUP OF THE NAUTICAL RESEARCH GUILD

The regular meeting was held at the Seaman's Church Institute on March 19th. The guest of honor was Mr. Charles G. Davis, the well known author and model builder. Mr. Davis, who now is 82 years of age, gave a very interesting and instructive talk. He told about his experiences as a seaman on a bark sailing around the Horn to the west coast of South America and about some of the many models he has built. Most of his models are of two types: small ones of vessels under sail and large highly detailed models of the plank and frame method, and he gave some useful ideas on the construction of such models -- Mr. Davis is author of the "Built-Up Ship Model" - a publication of the Marine Research Society, Salem.

Ransom Hughes supplemented Mr. Davis's talk by describing in some detail a model of a shipyard made by Mr. Davis which is now in the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia. John A. Johnson contributed some interesting reminiscences of his 23 years in sail. Frank Thober gave a brief description of the list of American square-riggers he is compiling which is now being published in "Log Chips".

It was decided that at the next meeting each member would bring in some item of interest - a model, picture, book etc. - and be prepared to tell the others about it.

Those present were:
Gordon Bell George Dannenberg Ransom Hughes A. G. Law Lewis Shafer
E. Schier Bosley James Frost John Johnson Albert Parsons William Palmer
Mr. and Mrs. Chas. G. Davis Angela Geele Dr. & Mrs. A. Klein Roy Rogers John Shed
Mr. & Mrs. F. W. Thober William Wilkinson Jay Williams



"Florence A" June 1987

THE GUILD DICTIONARY PROJECT
By John Lyman

One of the fields of American sea language that we should concentrate on is that of unconventional phrases - in plain English - slang. There was recently published in England a dictionary of "Sea Slang of the Twentieth Century", by Wilfred Granville (Winchester Publications, London, 1949). This is an excellent work as far as it goes, but its scope is limited almost entirely to the language of the Royal Navy, and it tends to become inaccurate when it wanders far from this basis. "Stars and bars", for example, is defined as the United States ensign.

American naval slang is almost entirely lacking from this work, and, as far as I know, no serious collection of American naval slang has ever been attempted. A few minutes thumbing through Granville's book showed that all the following are lacking, and these are just a warming up on the full potentialities of American naval slang:

Black-shoe navy (a term recently suppressed by official order): the general service, as contrasted to the naval air service; bucket: a derogatory or affectionate term for any vessel (also rust-bucket); flight skins: orders to duty involving flying (and flying pay); dead horse: pay drawn in advance; flat top: aircraft carrier;gyrene: a Marine (Granville has "gerine"); honey barge: a garbage lighter (from the gulls that cluster around it, like bees round a hive); mustang: an officer who commenced his career as an enlisted man (Granville uses "hawseholer"). Prune barge: the USS CALIFORNIA; swabbie or swab-jockey: the Marines' term for a bluejacket; tin can or can: a destroyer; torpedo juice: grain alcohol from torpedo stores, surreptitiously consumed as beverage (compass juice is similarly abstracted from quartermaster's stores).

Our merchant marine is no less rich in such terms, many of them shared with the Navy, such as: Awful-Hungry Line: the American-Hawaiian S.S. Co. (which has the letters A-H on its house-flag); Charley Noble: the galley stack (Granville defines it as the galley stove); shaft-alley wireless; rumor (the equivalent of grapevine ashore or scuttlebutt in the Navy).

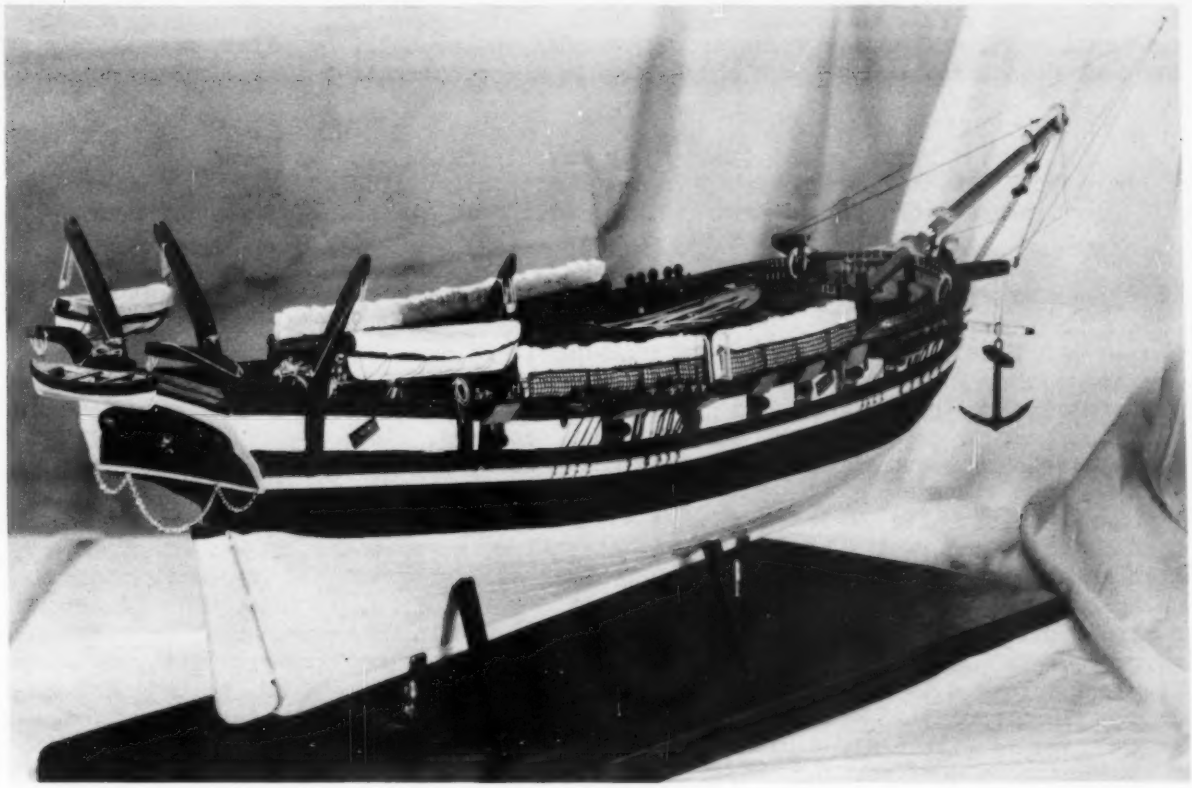
These are only examples, and most anyone can cite dozens more in a few minutes. Moreover, some of the definitions or derivations given above are very likely matters of opinion with which other Guild members will disagree. So break out those 3"x5" cards or any other piece of paper, write down your nautical slang terms, with definitions, and send them to the Guild Dictionary Project, 7801 Gateway Blvd., Washington 19, D. C.

A HITCH-HIKING WHALE
From the "Midway Current" USS Midway-CVB-41

It is unusual when the crew of a ship gets a peek at a whale out in the Mediterranean Sea, but it is more unusual when the shale drapes himself around the bow of a ship, and goes along for a free ride. At first most of us thought it was some kind of a practical joke, hearing the shouts, "Hey, come and see the whale". But the crew of the MIDWAY soon discovered that there actually was a whale stealing a ride on the bow of the ship. An 80 foot long whale in fact, bent double around the ship's bow, unable to free himself. It was of course, a matter of minutes before most of the crew lined up on the port and starboard forward catwalks to get a look at the "big fish".

The initial impact of striking the whale was so tremendous that the big whale was bent back into a "V" shape around the bow of the MIDWAY, and the water pressure resulting from the ships forward movement through the water kept the whale pressed to the bow with great force. Because the ship was refueling at the time, it was impossible to stop and free the animal, but upon completion of refueling the ship did stop and back slowly away from the whale, and he sank immediately. After awhile the crowds on the flight deck broke up and normal shipboard routine was resumed, but the whale that hitch-hiked will long be remembered as one of the oddest incidents of the Mediterranean Cruise.

From Bill Strong,ABU1, USS Midway,V-1F, c/o F.P.O. New York



THE U.S.S. LEXINGTON
A Built-up Ship Model
By Ransome Hughes

During my early shipmodeling days I built some models which I thought were good, and some which I thought were not so good. As I pondered the problems of my next model one time, the lines of a very favorite verse ran through my head, in which the poet says "Paint me a ship as is a ship", and I couldn't help but think I ought to build a ship "as is a ship". So, of course, if I were going to build a ship as is a ship I should build it as a ship is built.

At that time the only comprehensive discourse on the subject of the built-up ship model that I knew of was Charles G. Davis' book by that title, and I was fortunate in procuring a copy. I studied that book for nearly a year, and then went to work on a set of plans. I chose a scale of 5/16th of an inch to a foot and after completing my plans pondered the materials that I would use. I can give no good reason for choosing plywood for the frames except that at that time it seemed easier for me to saw out a full frame rather than build it up in futtocks. I chose split straight grained yellow pine for the keel, stem, stern post, and deadwood, and was fortunate in securing a well seasoned piece. I have never regretted the choice. It holds fastenings beautifully and to the best of my knowledge has never warped a fraction.

Browsing in odd corners of various lumber yards I ran on to a piece of 1/8" thick, beautifully grained, well seasoned white oak veneer. This I pounced upon and to my delight the lumberman let me have it for a song ($1.00 for a piece 2 feet wide by 4 feet long). This I used for planking, and with the exception of the sharp curve near the tuck and high around the bow, I was able to spring this planking in place cold. I used only the spout of a teakettle for steaming where necessary.

For fastening I chose lils or bank pins, and by driving them snug home with a small home-made nail set and subsequent sanding was able to approximate a fairly good scale

size nail head. Of course these are all hidden in the hull, by paint, but do show on the deck planks and add a touch of realism to the construction by indicating the lines of the deck beams.

With only a normal amount (and who is normal and at the same time a ship modeler) of spare time effort I had the ship in frame with bilge clamps, keelson, deck-clamps, rail clamp, shear strake, and intermediate carline in place in an even 100 hours. This represents an approximate elapsed time of six weeks.

I was overjoyed to find that by using standard materials (white oak and black walnut) and adequate steaming I could construct a very beautiful set of head rails so that even Mr. Davis would be proud of them should he see them. Once I made up my mind to do this in the orthodox manner, the difficulties disappeared and the results far surpassed anything that I had previously done with substitute materials such as plastics, bamboo, or reed. The decking, hatch comings, bits, and fife rails offered little difficulty, and my model was soon ready for painting.

Some additional research gave me a satisfactory basis for my painting scheme which is cream underwater body to represent tallow, no boot top, black top sides, which shear strake, white gunport strake, black cap rail, and red inside the bulwarks. For hammock netting stantions I hammered flat a piece of No. 16 copper wire, bent it to shape, drilled two holes in the bottom, and tacked it to the cap rail at suitable intervals. Then, using a piece of No. 16 copper wire pulled straight with vise and pliers, I soldered is to the top of the stantions. An old piece of old fine net window curtain dipped in India ink served as an excellent and very business-like looking netting. A little study of the hammock problem brought forth the idea that a hammock mattress must have been approximately 4 x 7 feet. Using a cardboard template to these dimensions, I cut a generous supply of rectangular soft muslin hammock bags. I rolled these around a rather fat pencil, creased them, folded them in half lengthwise, put on a lashing of linen thread, and proceeded to stow my hammocks until the nettings were full. After completing the job, I counted the hammocks in the nettings and found there were 93 hammocks. Our crew history tells us that the crew consisted of 90 men. So my scale couldn't have been far wrong.

My next problem was guns. I turned out of bronze welding rod a scale twelve pounder, and then from the sketches in Mr. Davis' book and other research built up wooden carriages which look like the real thing. Using brass model and plaster moulds, sixteen very respectable lead cannon resulted. However, when looking at my deck all dressed with black cannons, I couldn't resist the temptation to turn out another brass cannon and replace the two black bow chasers with brass ones. I'll admit they add handsomely to the overall appearance of the deck.

Building a steering wheel according to Mr. Davis' description is not as difficult as one might think. However, I'll admit to three attempts which landed in the trash can before I was satisfied with the fourth attempt. I took an old wide file, softened it with heat, and with my small Casco motor tool ground down the shape of a wheel spoke, allowing space in the face of the tool for the square portion of the spoke at the rim and the hub. I then reheated the file and tempered it, and turned out eight spokes as nearly perfect as if they had been cast from a master. A 1/8" thick slat of boxwood turned on a small face plate yielded the perfect circle of exact diameter for my wheel. I then carefully drew out with drafting instruments to exact size on a piece of cardboard the completed wheel, mounted this cardboard on a block of soft pine, drilled a recess in the center just deep enough to receive the hub (which had been previously turned out)to the correct depth, laid my boxwood rim on the drawing, and marked the cutouts for the segments between the spokes. I carefully separated those segments with a tiny model maker's circular saw. Using cut-off lils and small drills, I assembled the spokes to the hub right on the drawing. Then using Casco glue I assembled the segments between the spokes until they formed a perfect circle. This was allowed to dry a full 36 hours. Two brass rings were cut out on the lathe from

shim brass .010 thick. These brass segments were drilled together to accomodate one cut-off lil in each segment and one in each spoke. The glued-up wheel was removed from its drawing, the brass rings assembled on both sides with lils sticking through, and a pencil soldering iron completed the rivet head on the cut-off end of the lil. A fine file did the dressing, and as beautiful a little steering wheel as any one has ever seen was the result.

The ship as you see her in the accompanying photographs has nearly reached the rigging stage. Several guns have their proper tackle rigged, sand tubs are in the process of manufacture, dummy powder charges and shot racks are in the making, fore and main masts are completed ready to install, bow sprit and jibboom are in place, and although all this work has been spread over a period of ten years due to intermediate periods of inactivity, the total working time to date does not exceed 1,000 hours. To me the satisfaction gained by seeing a hull grow from keel up so far exceeds the feeling one gets from chipping, planing, and sanding a solid block of wood or a sandwich job, that there is no comparison. I am quite sure that I shall be criticized for leaving off some planking on the portside just to prove that I have frames, carlins, keelson stantions, and hanging knees all exactly where they belong. Frankly I'm not interested in proving that to any one. I know they're there. And I know that it took forty pounds of metal in the form of ax heads, wrenches, hammers, and lead weights to sink this little ship just to her water line in a bathtub. It is also a source of satisfaction to know that she did not leak. To me she's a ship as is a ship.

BOOK REVIEW
by Winthrop Pratt, Jr.

T. C. LETHBRIDGE, BOATS AND BOATMEN (London: Thames and Hudson, 1951). Here is a book which outlines the development of the boat, from dugout to modern trawler, and which does not require a knowledge of technical terms to be understood.

It is an honest book, fulfilling its purpose as an outline, and without pretense to anything else, but written in a way which will provoke considerable thought in the reading thereof. The author's observations regarding certain phases of boat evolution are not confused with known facts, but the validity of these observations is supported by these facts.

Even those "brothers in skepticisms", the model builder and arm-chair admiral will enjoy a voyage as passenger with this writer.

In the opinion of this reviewer, Lethbridge has made two very important observations: that the obvious is often overlooked, and that a statement once accepted as fact is sometimes repeated long after it has been shown questionable.

SAN FRANCISCO-BUILT WHALERS
from John Lyman

In reply for Mr. Boland's request for reference for my notes on this subject, the article "Whaling Out of 'Frisco" in Sea Breezes for April 1939 supplied all the facts except the assertion that the San Francisco-built whalers were among the finest in the world (my own opinion as a native San Franciscan) and the statements re the Dickies (based on obituary of John W. Dickie in Oakland Tribune, 4 Aug. 1827.)

For further information, including the sources of Sea Breezes story, Mr. Boland should consult the Annual Reports of the S. F. Chamber of Commerce for the period 1880-1885; Hittel's "Industries of California"; Lloyd's Register or Bureau Veritas; C. T. Hopkins et al. Report on Port Charges, Shipping and Shipbuilding, etc. (San Francisco 1885;) and the report of the U.S. Commission of Fisheries for 1880-1895.

As to marine engine building in San Francisco, Mr. Boland should talk to someone at the Union Works (now Bethlehem) and should investigate the history of the Risdon Iron Works, which engined most of the steam whalers. The engine that George W. Dickie put into the Whaler BALAENA in 1883 is stated to have been the first triple-expansion engine built in the United States (Morrison, "History of American Steam Navigation," 18 Aug. 1918). I would be delighted to learn the name of any vessel engined at San Francisco with imported engines after 1860, or of any whaler fitted out at that port with second-hand engines.

NAUTICAL RESEARCH GUILD ★
Dedicated to the Era of Sail
SECRETARY'S MONTHLY LETTER
THE SECRETARY'S MONTHLY LETTER WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1948

The Nautical Research Journal is published by the members of the Nautical Research Guild, a non-profit organization.

The articles, drawings and sketches are contributed by Guild members and the only revenue is from the annual dues.

(All Rights Reserved)

ANNUAL DUES — $5.00

MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN	WILLIS L. NYE
3038 Bridge Street	Oakland, California

HARRY D. HAMILTON, SECRETARY-TREASURER 15004 EAST GRANADA AVE. WHITTIER, CALIFORNIA, U.S.A.

Correct Mr. Nye's address to Hayward, California

LETTERS TO THE SECRETARY

From Mehrel Shank -- Brown, Son and Ferguson publish a list of plans. One is a built-up model of the MARIE SOPHIE of Falmouth which is listed as a simple plank built model-address: 52-58 Darnley St., Glasgow, S. L. They are the best quality in every respect Percival Marshall Co., Ltd. has published30 sets of plans covering the period from 900 A.D. to 1800 A.D. Catalog is free. They are drawn by Clive Milward, whose pen name is "Nautilus". One is the SOVEREIGN OF THE SEAS-1637. I am pleased that I had the opportunity to lend my plans of the CUTTY SARK to Fred Manning who is building her on 1/4" scale. I have most of my plans of the ships I have registered in the Guild Ship Model Registry and will be glad to lend them to anyone interested.

From Carola W. Paine, Salt Water Books -- "Darcy Lever's Young Officers Sheet Anchor". Because of the many comments and references to this famous book, I am giving you the following list of editions which this shop has handled in its 21 years of existence:

Leeds, 1808) London, 1808) First edition
Second Edition, London, (1819) London, (1835)
First Philadelphia, from Second London, Philadelphia(1823)
Second American Edition, from the Last London Edition, N.Y. 1827.
American Edition, with Additions by George W. Blunt, N. Y. 1843.
(Includes "Queen of the West").
-----N.Y., 1853. (Queen of the West, Forbes Rig & Dimensions of the clipper i.e., Swordfish, Flying Dutchman, Young America and Great Republic).
---- N.Y., 1858. ---- N.Y. 1863.

Altho my notes on these editions are not always extensive, it would seem that the 1843 edition was first to have any changes, and these were mostly additions. The preface to the 1863 edition says that several of the plates illustrating the old cumbrous method of rigging had been retained, as there are still some ships rigged that way.

From H. T. Fitzpatrick, Jr. I'm back from a thoroughly satisfying week's trip to New York, which I mostly spent in looking at model collections and in sea-book buying. One afternoon I was in Mrs. Carola Paine's establishment and ran into Dr. Berensen, who was in New York on a similar mission. We recognized each other as fellow Guildsmen on sight, and I feel I've made an acquaintance worth having. Score one more mark for the Guild. I want to bring to the attention of the Guild - H. J. Wild, 520 East 11th St., New York, who carries every imaginable specie of wood. I bought a supply of lemon, Swiss pear, boxwood, and holly. He also carries a huge assortment of imported ship modelers tools, plans, parts, and fittings and has Underhill's plans in stock. Albert Constantine, mentioned in March, reports that he is indefinitely out of stock of wood for modelers.

QUERIES

Query No. 186--from Albert C. Wagner--Whale Bark CORA. I have her last logbook and am trying to get the dope to model her. Who has her earlier logs? And look at these entries: Dec. 21, 1841 - Sent down royal masts.
Dec. 30, 1841 - Sent down the fore topgallant mast and yard. Lat. 45s.

March 18, 1843 - Sent down royal masts and yards and topgallant yards.
Apr. 21, 1843 - Sent aloft main royal mast.
Jan. 5, 1844 - Sent up fore royal mast and fore topgallant yards.
Notice that the Dec. 30, '41 entry mentions separate royal and topgallant masts but that once only. Now -- were these four part masts or did they call the pole a royal mast even tho she carried the topgallant sail. Granting that the Dec. 30th entry is an error, please tell me if other whalers called that upper mast a royal instead of a topgallant mast or if any whalers carried the four part mast and if so where can I get a sketch.

Query No. 187--from Captain J. Ferrell Colton, Lone Ridge, Box 1121, Flagstaff, Ariz. The ATLAS ex BERTHA L. DOWNS. This is a request from our membership. In behalf of the ALANDS SJOFARTSMUSEUM, Marieham, Aland, Finland. I am writing to inquire if there is anyone who can supply me with the plans or leads to the location of such plans of the wood 4 mstd. schooner ATLAS ex BERTHA L. DOWNS, built by the New England Co. at Bath, Me., in 1908. This vessel was built as a wood 3 mstd. schooner of the following dimensions: 1 deck, 2 traverse bulkheads, 715 gross tons, 606 net tons, 175.4 length, 37.1 breadth, 14.2 depth. Her original home port was New Haven, Conn., her official number was 204865 and her signal letters were KWMI. Any information, drawings, or information relative to this vessel are urgently needed and would be greatly appreciated. Please send direct to Capt. Colton.

Query No. 188 - Have any Guild members served in the ship DUNSYRE and/or the 4 mast Bark JOHN ENA?

Query No. 189 -- Please send the name or names of other books which deal with the method and details of construction of a built-up ship model. The Charles G. Davis book is of course sold now at high prices and difficult to obtain.

Query No. 190 -- Making small cannon. Suppose you do not have a jeweler's lathe or a chuck on a motor what would you suggest I do to make ships cannon - and how - and what with - or shall I stick to merchant ships without guns.

Query No. 191 -- Where can I get authoritive information on muzzle loading guns and carriages, particularly the carriages? I have some information along this line but nothing very complete and would like some authoritive data.

Query No. 192 -- Where is Henry B. Culver's Model of the SOVEREIGN OF THE SEAS? A query from a prospective member -- "I am building a scale model of the British Galleon SOVEREIGN OF THE SEAS, however I am having great difficulty in obtaining information pertaining to this vessel. It has come to my attention that a model of this ship was made by Henry B. Culver in or about 1918. This model was on display at the Museum of Science and Industry, N. Y. City. Since the closing of this museum, I have been unable to locate where the model was then sent. Any information of the whereabouts of this model will be greatly appreciated.

Model Bases, and the Paint Job, from Mr. and Mrs. Churchill

From our first Lady Ship Modeler and her husband - Mr. and Mrs. Churchill - contd. from April issue.

"We can not lay too much stress on the fact that a good base will enhance any model. Brass supports are to our mind handsomer than any hard carved ones. Recently we have used the new water based paints (so called Super-Kemtones) - Our choice is the Full Color by Fuller. The advantages are - extremely quick drying, no running, dull finish, and your brushes and hands can be washed in warm water.

To give the smooth permanent finish, which is easy to keep clean, we have used the cans of Clear Plastic Spray found in hardware stores. Finally if you are like us, you will use your inherent brains and improvise."

ANSWERS TO QUERIES

Query No. 132 of February, 1951 - Lines of an English brig circa 1845. Answer by John Lang. If you write The Holborn Drawing & Tracing Co., 60-62 Queen Elizabeth Ave., Hillington, Glasgow, Scotland S. W. 2 you will be able to get a set of drawings for a 12 gun brig to scale of 1/4" to 1' similar to H.M. brigs MARTEN, SEA FLOWER, PILOT OF 1840. There are 5 drawings to the set. They are numbers 777, 778, 779, 780, and 781 in their August 1950 catalogue and at that time were priced 6/- each. For an average model 777, 778, and 779 would be satisfactory but for super detail, the full set is advisable. I can thoroughly recommend the drawings from this source and have a large number myself of both sailing and power craft.

Query No. 177 of Daniel F. Dyer by Howard I. Chapelle -- Ships of the Spritsail Topmast. There is a rigging plan of a ship of this period in the drawing files of the Science Museum, South Kensington, London, S. W. 7; picture and drawing in Relamb's book are useful in this matter. The only spar material in plans are the standard spar plans for the establishment of 1745 -- nothing earlier than I saw at least.

Query No. 180 of A. Maury Morris by Roy Rogers -- Drill Press for #.80 drill. In recent years, several flexible shafts have come on the market. The speed and handiness of these and also the hand grinders save considerable time in operations requiring a lot of drilling, like attaching planking. These should be investigated to see if they will take the small size drills. An all around woodworking unit designed expressly for modelers is the Midget Universal. This small compact machine is basically a circular saw, but the numerous attachments convert it to a lathe, thickness planer, and drill press, among other things. The drill press is quite rugged, taking drills up to 1/4" yet sensitive to handle a #.80. This outfit is made and sold by William C. Roemer, 650 Winthrop Ave., New Haven, Conn. These machines are nationally advertised.

Query No. 184 - ALABAMA material. Answer by Howard I. Chapelle. The ALABAMA material available is all from published sources which are to be found in their original form in the well-known post-Civil War Publications of the official naval records. This contained a picture not too well-drawn and some description. The McCann plans appeared based on this material with reconstruction. The only known source of information on this ship is the completely rigged shipyard model in the Board Room of the Laird Shipyard at Birkenhead, England. It is said that plans were made from this model for an "American Millionaire" some years before the War but no trace of these plans have yet been found and the shipyard states they can find no copies. Perhaps photos might be obtained from Lairds. But I have been unable to obtain any plans there though I daresay competent men could be hired to take off the plan from the model by Lairds permission if one could afford the cost.

THE GUILD SLOP CHEST

It has been suggested by several that we devote a space for the exchange and sale of tools, equipment, books, plans, photos and what have you. There is no charge. Write directly.

I have some photos of modern ships and will later have a file of named ships -- base price on 2 x 7" is .50 - Jack Slattery.

I want copies of McCann's Shipmodeler--H. T. Fitzpatrick.

"Will the Guild try to run down a copy of MacArthur's 'Last Days of Sail on the West Coast'. I would like an original edition". Wheaton R. Brewer, c/o "The California Farmer", 83 Stevenson St., San Francisco 5. Mr. Brewer is a friend of Captain Robinson.

The Wreck by Capt. R. Lobez, F.R.G.S.

The sails are rent
The tall mast bent
The helm and bowsprit gone
And fast and far 'midst that billowy war
The foundering barque drives on.

Mourn not for the dead
On their sandy bed
Nor their last long sleep deplore.
But mourn for those
In their homes of woe
That weep forever more.

Comments on Query No. 183 -- THE FAIR AMERICAN
by Howard I. Chapelle

I cannot throw any additional light on the history of the actual vessel. But I consider the dimensions given on John Stevens' plan interesting. A 16 gun brig 36' beam and drawing, by scale, 18 feet would certainly be extraordinary in 1780. The SIGNET, ex GARLAND, taken from the French in 1779 is the largest brig whose plans I have seen of that period. She was pierced for 22 guns and was rated in the R. N. as an 18 gun vessel. She was 110'-11", on the gun deck, 28'-3½", extreme beam, 9'-0" hold and by scale may have had a draft of as much as 15'. Another prize brig, the Dutch-built ORESTES was 100'-11", 30'-4" and 12' hold. Thus it seems to me that the FAIR AMERICAN model as drawn is too wide and too deep for her rating - could 3/8" scale be made to fit? This would make her more nearly the usual dimensions of brigs in her period - say 72' on deck, 24' beam and 8' hold. But rescaling may raise the devil with the scale of the deck fittings. It is difficult for me to accept the model in the Rogers' Collection as an American-built vessel. I am tentatively of the opinion that the mid-section form may indicate a British design for it is to be seen in English cutters of this date and there were also many 14 and 16 gun R.N. brigs 1779-1788 on the cutter model. I can see no reason to question the assigned date of the model of course. The reverse in the upper headrail is certainly French but might have been copied. The lack of swivels in the armament of the model is worthy of notice. The model, to me is suspicious yet I cannot be certain that my objections are wholly valid - still I think the assigned scale at present is definitely in error. I should say, I think, that 100' brigs were few and far between in 1780 judging by the huge number in the Admirality Collection of Draughts of around this date. The general run seems to be between 65' and 92' on deck with the great majority around 70-80 feet. The drawing of the model is an excellent idea as it will permit comparisons and it will give material on details not readily obtained elsewhere. As to the rigging plan - the showing of the lower course sheets is apparently intended, for these surely cannot be preventer braces with chesstrees so far forward? I hope someone will express ideas on this brig for she is a most interesting item.

Comments by H. C. Wagner.

I am getting ready to model this beautiful brig--from Stevens' drawing and from direct and easy access to the original model at Annapolis but -- what about the seventh gun? Setting so close to the bulkhead, the gun could have no side tackles and would have to be worked all from one side. Also cannot be run in to load without removing the ladders. It looks right to set the bulkhead back under the end of the quarter deck, making an overhang and leaving room to work the gun. Right or wrong? Please comment. Especially desire Chapelle's and Stevens' ideas. Would the ladder be taken down when the gun is being run in? Sounds funny but how else?

Note: The Model of the FAIR AMERICAN is in the H. H. Rogers Collection at the U. S. Naval Academy Museum. The lines of this model were taken off by John R. Stevens without reconstruction. They were published in the February 1952 issue.

SEAMEN OF THE GUILD -- ATTENTION

About 20 Guild members have served in sail. We plan a two page spread of rigging details which will be written by our members who have learned rigging the hard way. Our many captains, mates, and A.B.'s know the finer details of ship rigging which are overlooked in the usual rigging plan. There are some bits of rigging which you have set up yourselves on your own ship. Captain Lobez says: "Different mates -- different long splices". Let us have some of the overlooked items. We have been missing a bet. Each sketch will show the name of the member who contributed it. Do not go into details too large for we want many sketches by the many members who have followed the sea. Send to the Secretary a description and a rough sketch for Herbert Scott to draw up. We do not ask for any especial details and we will fill other pages as the material collects. We want this for the RECORD.

Introducing New Members

Nantucket Historical Association - Mr. Edouard Stackpole, President, 37 N. Liberty St., Nantucket, Mass. This famous society was referred to the Guild by Mr. Charles Sayle. Mr. Stackpole writes: "Our interests in your interesting publication are primarily in the field of whaling and sealing, but all maritime activities will be of value".

Dr. Richard B. Howard, 27 Ash Street, Floral Park, New York. Dr. Howard is interested in ship model building, particularly in the era of the clippers.

John Lang, 184 High Street-(Street) Somerset, England. Mr. Lang is a member of the Society for Nautical Research and the Thames Shiplovers Society of London. He is an ardent ship modeler. His "most ambitious project" is a 3/8" scale model of a Brixham Trawler using the built-up frame and plank method. Mr. Lang wrote a very interesting article for the "Compleat Modellist" describing in detail his method of making the sea for a waterline model by carving it from wood. His letter is full of information and will be given the members later.

Herbert Gurley Purcell, 6516 Landis Ave., Carmichael, California. If we read between the lines of Mr. Purcell's nautical interests, we will note that he covers a lot of territory. First he is a Marine and Stationary Engineer, Retired. He lists his interests as follows: Old Sailing Vessels, Early Steamboats, Salvage Operations. Mehrel Shank brought the Guild to the attention of Mr. Purcell.

Gam Chair

A post card from Doctor Berenson from Washington -- "Yesterday, I spent the entire day in the Mariners' Museum at Newport News - the entire staff treated me royally and I enjoyed my stay immensely. I was thrilled by the number, variety and good condition of the exhibits. It is a wonderful institution, set in an appropriate and beautiful spot."...Mehrel Shank writes--"Concerning the Guild Poster -- if each member put his name, address and telephone number on the one he puts up, anyone interested in the Guild could contact him--thus you have a personal touch."...Stuart Boland is on track of sperm teeth and whale bone and says he hopes to have some soon from Field's Landing for the Guild's scrimshaw worker, Charles Sayel...We are reminded by Dr. Van Name's article and sketch that the Guild proudly boasts 15 doctor members---it is too bad they cannot hold a clinic and diagnose each other's models.. Paul Brumbea, Jr. suggests that the members write H. E. Green & Son, Wilmington, Vt. for a booklet on the "Model Builder"--a wonderful tool...Capt. John A. Johnson calls our attention to the misspelling of his ship registered in the Guild Ship Model Registry--the name is KOPENHAVN--after the City of Copenhagen--Also he is anxious to have his friends know that he has registered his ship CALIFORNIA...Capt. Harry O'May of Hobart, Tasmania went for a drive to have a look at the hulk of the OTAGO which was Conrad's only command--This old hulk is immortalized in "Shadow Line"...John M. Minuse was run over by an auto and broke about everything but his courage and his love of the Gloucesterman-COLUMBIA.--He has been fighting a long come back and to show he is still going strong he enters this query--"What is the height of the break in the deck of the COLUMBIA--He has sent us the name of a prospect and if John can do that from his hospital bed--How about some of you fellows who have two feet under you...The Guild Slop Chest--How about dickering off some of that stuff you have kicking around which you no longer use and pass it along to the man who can use it--Dig it out and swap it...Those who have been on winter vacation are now checking in--Be sure to send your address when you go on your summer vacation--3rd class mail is not forwarded and is returned here--Report any unusual delays in receiving the Journal on separate postcard--Send in some short items--This issue we had a terrible struggle to find short items to fill five spots --which totaled 43 lines--and they ran 5-7-9-10-and 12 lines. We go to press around the first of the month--photos and drawings for reproduction should be here about the end of the 3rd week of the month.....

Correction: Page 56, MEDFORD-BUILT SHIPS, first chapter, after the word countries, add these words -- Coastal trade also increased and Medford felt the need for larger and larger ships - (and built them accordingly). We regret this sad error in the very fine article by Dr. Horace K. Richardson.

Date of Mailing: 5/9,52 Harry D. Hamilton